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finest remains of the Moors at Seville or Granada, and the stucco, formed of the finest shell lime, has acquired by age the hardness and mellow beauty of enamel. Our own artists have found no difficulty in acclimatizing Oriental art.

And there are yet other mines of beauty to be delved in which have as yet been unexplored or at least unworked. Spain, Moorish in much of its art, Morocco itself, Turkey, Persia, India, China and Japan have all been drawn on for samples and examples and are more or less known to us, but we have neglected Siam and Burmah and Annam. Siamese princes have visited us, but the products of Siamese industry are as yet practically unknown except to the very few.

Probably the French adventures among those distant peoples may lead to our better and more general acquaintance with their quaint pottery, embroidery, lacquer and metal work. They have a character all their own, full of suggestiveness to the cosmopolitan workman.

Mohammedans are forbidden by their religion to represent anything in the heaven above, or the earth beneath, or the waters under the earth. This restriction compelled the development of beauty in color and geometrical form. The Shiahs among the Persians and Cashmeregues have less rigidly adhered to the tenets of the prophet; and scenes of war, the chase, the harem, the workshop are as common in frieze or dado in Shiraz or Ispahan as they were in Egyptian tombs or Grecian temple or Pompeian villa, and as they are now in Hindu or Buddhist interiors.

And we need not confine ourselves to the reproduction of such topics. It is possible to devise an agreeable variety from the decoration involved in the use of Benares placques or Japanese storks and umbrellas, of motives foreign to us in age or clime, classical or otherwise. Our own daily life is not without its poetry, and can well supply the artist with themes, the expression of which may in some distant day tell a tale to the mythical New Zealander of the future when the tall towers of the Tribune, Produce Exchange, and Roebling's Bridge have become ancient ruins.

One of the most charming rooms in India is a square drawing-room in Madras, which has a frieze of figures, in the flowing garments and vivid colors worn in Hindustan, engaged in all the various industries of that land of hand labor, frescoed by a young officer who had been taken with the animated little tale pictures of Trichinopoly, exquisitely painted in miniature with body colors and bronze powders. It is an album of every-day occupations, lively, varied, and thoroughly decorative.

Let it not, however, be understood that any too realistic representation of the modern pursuits of western civilization is suggested. A St. Patrick's Day procession would be highly unpoetic and, indeed, a subject to make angels weep. But the idealizing of the advances in handicrafts, steam, electricity, the printing press, etc., is certainly not only permissible, but susceptible of enchanting treatment. A most charming frieze has lately been produced illustrating "The Arts and Sciences." It is rich in incident, happy in grouping, full of spirit, highly idealized, and admirably interpreting an endless variety of the occupations of modern man and womankind.

A good decorative suggestion would be an Arctic Frieze with groups illustrating the adventures of the explorers from start to return. The costumes of the navy in fair weather and foul, of Esquimaux and hospitable Greenlanders would not be open to the reproach of stiffness, and the hunting, sledging, camping, festivities, sickness, rescues, etc., would furnish incident in interesting variety. The followers of Nimrod in all ages would be a noble subject for treatment in the hall of a country house or shooting box.

Individuality, grace, and harmony of design are requisite now-a-days in furniture, floor, ceiling or wall coverings, and thanks to the progress of invention, even people of very moderate means can now surround themselves with objects of beauty that the merchant princes of the old Genoese or Venetian Republics would have envied and paid fabulous sums for.

TASTE IN FURNISHING.

BY MARY GAY HUMPHREYS.

A HAPPY sign of the time is that the growth of taste is gaining steadily on our desire for luxury. The more we find delight in forms and colors, the less stress we lay upon values that can be computed in dollars and cents. Aesthetics are in fact among the great levelers of the world since they bring people of all conditions upon a common plane of enjoyment.

One of the first things important to learn by proper ambitions of beautiful homes is that the outlay of money is not the principal consideration. Almost every one admires the surroundings of an artist, but this is not because he has expended a fortune in them, but because they have been brought together with a sense of unity and harmony, for which the tradesmen's bills can offer no receipt. This is not the faintest suggestion that our homes for every-day wear should resemble artists' studios. That would be plagiarism of the worst sort. But only that something corresponding to the artist's mental attitude should underlie the taste and pleasure of furnishing.

It is impossible to give an infallible recipe for fitting up a house. In fact, the chief difficulty has hitherto been that we have been striving for a formula, and have made the same approach to it in furnishing that we have made in architecture, as so many miles of weary streets and commonplace interiors testify. One may find, however, some starting points worth consideration, and the advance from these may result at least in individual expression which of itself is worth more or less.

Recently I have gone through a number of noteworthy interiors, some of which are made resplendent with treasures for which two continents have been ransacked, while others contain nothing that is not within the grasp of moderate means. In all of these best worthy of attention, the most constant impression was that of color. It is a trite fact that the uneducated eye as well as the educated of all forms of artistic enjoyment responds most readily to color, and this suggests that through color is the easiest solution of the question of furnishing.

This immediately broadens the sense of the term, and makes the taste of the householder begin with the bare walls, unless he has confidence in his architect and is willing to follow in the lines he has laid down. For it may be confidently asserted that with the walls satisfactorily treated the furnishing proper becomes an easy task.

One may take as a case in point the drawing-room of the house of Mr. Henry Hiliard. The wood work is mahogany richly inlaid with white mahogany, and is lavishly present in columns and panels. The wall hangings are of embroidered silks of the same tints. The floor is laid with the two woods, and the cornice carries the two colors into the cream and gold of the ceiling. A warm subtle tone, resultant of the two colors, bathes the room and the room seems almost furnished before the furniture proper is reached.

Any one at all sensitive to color, instinctively supplies in imagination all that is necessary to complete the room. The wall hangings require no pictures. The inlaid panels above the mantels are sufficient unto themselves. The white onyx mantels will suffer a few pieces of color in harmony with the tone of the room to accent their own delicacy.

The few necessary pieces of furniture repeat the tints of the room, but their further identity is lost. The room composes like a picture according to a certain color scheme. But how easy could this color impression have been mixed by dragging, for example, into the room a luxuriously carved teak wood cabinet, a Florentine table, and an old oak Jacobean chair.

I have in my mind now a room hopelessly ruined in this way. Architecturally, it is a corridor, which pillars divide into a passage-way and two arcades, connecting two rooms devoted to other definite purposes. The floor is inlaid with mosaics of Sienna marble, and the pillars are of the same marble. The wall hangings of velours and gold continue the same tints to the vaults, which are ornamented in gold and the tympana filled with mural paintings of great beauty. The salient feature of the room is of course its delicate color, which deepens into greater luxuriance in the ceiling. But behold, the form of the room is destroyed by heavy ebony cabinets placed corner-wise. The delicate floor is covered with a gay French carpet which rises up to meet you on entering the room. The luxurious furniture is of yellow satin utterly missing the tint, and made further obnoxious by machine embroidery. In the face of all this, one's vision is held in horrid fascination and the glory of the ceiling utterly lost.

All things being equal, one prefers rich materials, marble, bare woods, plush, and gold. The charm of color however exists independently of these. I have in my mind a small parlor that on entering one always has the sensation of ease and genial warmth, for colors create states of feeling and possess in this way power to please and to annoy. The ingrain carpet has melting tones of brown, yellow and red. The wall paper, which did not cost more than ten cents a roll, losing the yellow curry, the browns and red up to the lighter frieze

and are lost in the plain warm brown gray of the ceiling. The portières are of soft tints of red, the wood work is painted in light brown in which some red is felt. The furniture is of the simplest description, but responds always to some personal want. There are well chosen engravings, on an easel is an excellent water color of deep hued roses, and against a closet door a broad Japanese rendering of pheasants among peonies. The catalogue of detail, however, cannot make apparent the charm of color. But one cannot emphasize too frequently that it is in every one's grasp.

Another way of using color is by contrasts. This is more difficult and requires greater courage in the hands of the uninitiated, since it is necessary to use colors of the same value, however widely the tints differ. Suppose a room, in illustration of the boldest use of color. The wood work is painted red, not too dark, and in which there is a perceptible tinge of yellow. The walls are covered with Japanese chintz with a small gold figure on an ercu ground. The cornice introduces Indian blue, red, and gold, leading into the ceiling tinted a light yellow pink, in which the brush marks are very apparent, and, instead of being defects in execution, give a sense of lightness and air, the color being very thin that lifts the low ceiling. The window draperies are of blue denim, the tone of which is admirable. The mantel lambrequins are olive velours, the table cover light blue silk canton flannel bordered with olive. The portières are of dull red, the window seats and fire seat of deep red velours. The floor is stained mahogany red and is partially covered with Persian rugs and a white bear-skin mat. A black ebonized cabinet is on the wall. There is a mahogany escritoire, a Chippendale table, a yellow sofa, a willow chair, and a Boston rocker made luxurious with cushions. Nothing, it will be seen, is despised in this room which harmonizes, and the effect, for the room is veritable, enlists every one's attention and admiration.

I have recently seen an apartment in which the wood work throughout was painted a dark blue-green with gold in the hollows of the moldings. But every room was different. In one the wall hangings were of gold chintz, in another a warm light olive paper, and in still another deep red wall paper—these papers giving the suggestion which the furnishing of the rooms carried out. Gold, it may be said, is the great reconciler, and its use especially in darker corners and in shadow cannot be too lavish.

A good starting point for the furnishing of a room is a cherished piece of furniture, a picture, or some other object to which the room shall be subservient. For example, in a room with which I am familiar is an Oriental painting, a landscape with figures in which the local color is strong. This is placed as a panel in the wall. Corresponding panels are filled with tea chest matting gilded, and serving as the background for a profusion of vines and flowers painted broadly in yellows and browns with a few dashes of more vivid color, for it should be said its occupant is an artist. The space leading into the hallway is divided into tumuli arches and is filled with Oriental draperies. The broad window is screened with stained glass, staining the floor with color, and beneath is a low silk divan filled high with huge pillows carrying further the Oriental character of the room. This is but a suggestion which the ingenious mind possessing something rich, rare, or curious, can readily turn to serve its purpose.

It is always well to give a definite character to a room beyond the ordinary service of drawing-room, library, dining-room, or what not. Having settled on the background, by which must be understood the floor, walls, and ceiling add only those pieces of furniture which the nature of the room demands. Choose these for their form. A chair, for example, well constructed, is a possession for a life time. The covering may be renewed from time to time and is easily brought into relation with the prevailing color of the room. There are few people that do not consider cost in furnishing, so that it may be set down in the division of funds to devote the greater sum to the construction, is sound wisdom. Upholstering may be done in the house by skillful journeymen, and I have seen most attractive work done by the mistress and maids in cushions of Oriental bath towels judiciously fastened with ribbons.

Great distance toward furnishing fitly is traversed when it has been learned that a profusion of bric-a-brac does not tend that way. Bric-a-brac has its reasonable place, yea, even china ornaments, and porcelain dogs. But it is not for example on the slab of a bureau where one cannot find room to lay down a brush, or on slender legged tables in crowded drawing-rooms. But this is a subject too large to enter upon, and one can only say of this, and finally of the subject at large, the most potent aid is common sense.